SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

LANSING, MICHIGAN

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SENATORS BRATER AND BASHAM ASSAIL RECYCLING PACKAGE Both agree – "Legislation doesn't go far enough."

LANSING – Sen. Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor) and Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor) today expressed disappointment in the 10-bill package passed by the Senate today saying it does not go far enough in improving recycling efforts. While the bills attempt to measure litter and set recycling goals, critics contend that they do not offer concrete and progressive solutions to the current problems.

Currently Michigan's recycling rate is a full 10 percent behind the national average and 6 percent behind their Great Lakes neighbors.

"Michigan needs to raise its recycling rates," Brater said. "We can do this only through real programs, such as a surcharge on waste that will pay to expand local recycling programs. There is no need to create another council to study the problem. We need to act."

"The Senate had many options available to improve Michigan's recycling program, but they chose to ignore them," Basham said. "There are still a number of sound alternatives pending in the Senate, including expansion of the bottle bill."

While both Brater and Basham voted for parts of today's package, both contend that numerous other bills before the Senate could more actively address the problems. They urged colleagues to act on this critical legislation.

Brater and Basham supported expanded bottle bill legislation. Currently, three different bills to expand the bottle law are pending before the Senate. All three have the support of the Senate Democratic Caucus as well as overwhelming public support. Polls indicate that more than 70 percent of Michigan residents support expansion of the existing bottle law to include water, juice and sports drinks.

The recycling bills also increase the penalties for littering; establishes a statewide toll free number to report litter violations; and recommends a Waste Advisory Council.

"A toll-free number for reporting already exists," Brater said. "And another administrative level is simply another sign of inaction and inefficiency. Let's act."